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SUBJECT: FINNS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT RUSSIAN RESPONSE TO UNSCR
ON KOSOVO

REF: STATE 64975

Classified By: PolChief Greg Thome, Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Finland firmly supports UN Special Envoy Ahtisaari's proposals for Kosovo's final status and welcomes the draft UNSCR that the US circulated May 11. However, the Finns continue to pick up signals that leave them pessimistic about how Russia will respond. The GOF is engaged in its own quiet diplomacy to shore up EU unity on Kosovo, and will host President Tadic in Helsinki June 2. End Summary.

12. (C) In a follow-up to subject demarche, PolChief discussed the latest actions in the UNSC on Kosovo and the draft resolution that was circulated May 11 with Finnish MFA Balkans Office Director Juha Ottman. Finland remains staunchly supportive of UN Special Envoy (and former Finnish President) Martti Ahtisaari's proposals, including his recommendations on independence for Kosovo. Finland welcomed the draft UNSCR that the US and European UNSC members had circulated May 11, and was particularly pleased with the draft's endorsement of the Ahtisaari Settlement. (Germany had shared the UNSCR draft with Finland.)

13. (C) While the GOF remains fully supportive, it is growing increasingly pessimistic about how Russia will respond. According to Ottman, Germany told EU partners following the EU-Russia Summit that the GOR had "warned that the EU is being way too optimistic" about independence for Kosovo, which remains an absolute red line for Moscow. In bilateral conversations, the Russians have suggested that they may seek a UNSCR that does little more than disband the UNMIK Mission and replace it with the EU. Russia would be "perfectly happy to just rewrite UNSCR 1244, removing the word 'UNMIK' and putting in 'EU'," Ottman reported. From Finland's national perspective, any watered-down resolution that stops short of "fully endorsing" Ahtisaari's proposals would be "unacceptable," not least because it would put the EU Rule of Law mission in an "untenable" position.

14. (C) Despite Russia's hard line, the GOF continues to play a quiet leadership role to try to shore up EU unity behind Ahtisaari and our UNSCR draft. In addition, Ottman noted that President Tadic will visit Helsinki June 2 for talks with President Tarja Halonen, FM Ilkka Kanerva and Finnish EU Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn. The excuse for the visit is a soccer match between Finland and Serbia, but Rehn and the GOF will use the opportunity to address Kosovo, ICTY cooperation and the range of related issues.

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